

SAPC 20434

Cy 2 of 6

18 October 1957

MEMORANDUM TO: PROJECT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT : Follow-up Action on [] Accident

REFERENCE : [] (IN 27248) Dated 1 October 1957

1. In response to your query of 17 October concerning dissemination of information concerning [] accident, the following actions in chronological order have been taken:

a. On 30 September, [] transmitted [] (In 27184) to all detachments. This contained a brief summary of the accident with certain recommendations that the detachments should act on pending further examination.

b. On 1 October, Detachment A transmitted [] which in brief took exception to the recommendations, especially as to change in air speed schedule as recommended in []

c. On 2 October, in response to [] transmitted [] (In 27308) announcing procurement of a new hermetically sealed microswitch which was being placed in test and repeating the air speed restriction recommendation which should be followed until new switches were received.

d. On 3 October, Headquarters transmitted [] (OUT 69216) which gave a complete story of the accident as received from []

2. Of note is the fact that Lockheed feels the primary cause to be grounding within the flap microswitch. The sequence presumed to have occurred is that when flaps were shifted from the gust to the faired position that the grounding or shorting across within the switch completed the circuit for lowering the flaps with subsequent tail overload and failure.

3. I take no exception to this line of reasoning. However, this same sequence could have occurred had the flap switch been in the down position at the time the flaps were shifted. The circuit is so wired that with the gust control in the shifted (or gust) position the flap switch has no effect. However, when the gust control is shifted to the faired position, the flaps seek the position of the flap switch.

USAF review(s) completed.

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4. It is quite possible that [] could have, accidentally and without realizing it, bumped the flap switch to the down position sometime during his climb and after shifting to the gust position. The flap switch is located alongside and outboard of the throttle and according to [] can be reached and easily moved with the little finger.

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5. Lockheed also recommends shifting back to faired position not above 130 knots or 30,000 feet. This is in direct conflict with the recommendation following [] accident. At that time it was recommended that flaps be left in shifted position until 55,000 feet as it was thought possible turbulence was the cause. This, of course, is inconsistent but not considered dangerous as an interim measure until the new switches are installed. The pilot can always shift to gust position if he encounters turbulence.

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6. I am sending a cable out to all detachments concurring with Lockheed's interim recommendations and fixes and also recommending as standard procedure for pilots to first check flap switch for neutral position and then to monitor flap indicator when gust control is shifted to faired position. I will also send a query to Lockheed as to the feasibility of a design change which would preclude inadvertent lowering of wing flaps.

7. Pending a reply from Lockheed, other actions as outlined above are considered adequate.

[]
Acting Director of Operations

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PCS/DCI, []

Dist.:

- Cy 1 - addressee
- Cy 2 - DD/Proj ✓
- Cy 3 - Materiel
- Cy 4 - C. G.

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